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HEADLINE: take 1 of 5 -- rsa: Text of Tambo Interview in CAPE TIMES
 SOURCELINE: "Cape Town CAPE TIMES in English 4 Nov 85 p. 9 ((tentative))

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CAPE TIMES Interviews ANC's Oliver Tambo

{f3}MB070838 Cape Town CAPE TIMES in English{f1}

{f3}4 Nov 85 p 9 [Tentative]{f1}

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[Text] There has been a flurry of talks with the African National Congress recently, including the leaders of big business and the Progressive Federal Party. These contacts have raised questions about where the ANC stands on critical issues. So far, everyone's view but that of the ANC has been given in South Africa. The Editor of the CAPE TIMES, Anthony Heard, met the 68-year-old ANC leader Oliver Tambo in his North London home last week and conducted an interview with what came across as an essentially moderate black leader. The CAPE TIMES publishes the full interview as a contribution to peaceful solutions in South Africa in a matter of overwhelming public importance. / [passage between slant lines in bold face]

Heard:{em }The ANC is officially portrayed in South Africa as a communist, terrorist-type organization, almost presented to the public as demons. Now, since the public have no access to your views, how would you answer this, particularly the charge of being a communist-controlled organization?

Tambo:{em }It is important to observe that this has been a

persistent portrayal of the ANC by many people who are opposed to us. But the ANC is as ANC as it ever was. It is true that the ANC has members of the Communist Party who are members of the ANC. That has been the case almost since time immemorial. The ANC was established in 1912 and the SA Communist Party in 1921, and so there has been an overlapping of membership all along the line. But ANC members who are also members of the SACP make a very clear distinction between these two independent bodies. We cooperate a lot but the ANC is accepted by the SACP as leading the struggle. There is absolute loyalty to that position. It is often suggested that the ANC is controlled by the Communist Party... by communists. Well, I have been long enough in the ANC to know that that has never been true.

The Communist Party has its positions and the ANC has its positions. The ANC is guided in its policy and all its members are loyal to the Freedom Charter, and that is where you find all the positions of the ANC. They are reflected in the Freedom Charter. We don't depart from the Freedom Charter. So there is no problem of the ANC being controlled. Now this is also extended to control by the Soviet Union; much of this is propaganda. We go to the Soviet Union as we go to Sweden and to Holland and to Italy to ask for assistance in one form or another. And in all these countries we do get assistance, and assistance is given quite unconditionally. The Western countries, who do support us and we very much appreciate the assistance they give us, do not give us weapons of course, because they generally do not approve and their laws do not allow it. But in the socialist countries we get the weapons, so we go there to get what we can't get

elsewhere. And that's all. There is in it.

Heard: (em) Are you getting more support from the West now?

Tambo: (em) We are getting a great deal of support from the West, increasing support, in material terms, too; that support is growing.

Heard: (em) So the charge that you are a communist organization, you would reject strongly?

Tambo: (em) We would reject that. We would say that there is a communist party. So we are fortunate because if one is looking for a communist party it is there, but the ANC is not the Communist Party.

Now, the other aspect of being terrorists: (em) Again, there is a lot of exaggeration about this terrorism. Long before we had injured a soul, when we were very, very careful in our sabotage actions to avoid hurting anybody, and that is what we have been doing for the better part of 20 years now... even when we started, this was called terrorism. We knew what terrorism was and we thought that the people of South Africa are being misled about what terrorism was. We could have been terrorists if we had wanted to, but we chose not to be. So even that has been an exaggeration. It is true that more recently, as for instance in May 1983 when a bomb exploded and others were attempted, this was stepping up things. It is proper to recognise that this was after 20 years at it. We started in 1961 and 20 years later you get a bomb exploding. We could have done this much, much earlier on numerous occasions. We did not want to be seen as terrorists; we are trying to put on pressure. And we have been notoriously restrained in our armed actions (em-) notoriously.

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